

## **VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH**

### **Study on Legal Guardianship of a Minor by Court Petition**

#### **Adopted Recommendations**

##### **Guardianship**

1. Request that the Virginia Department of Social Services convene a study group with impacted stakeholders to study ways to develop full/permanent, temporary, and limited guardianship in Virginia to reflect the need for additional permanency goals for children. Further, request that the Virginia Department of Social Services complete its study and submit a final report with recommendations to the Commission on Youth and the Governor by December 1, 2021.

For this work group, the Virginia Department of Social Services shall collaborate with the Virginia Family Law Coalition, family law attorneys, the Supreme Court of Virginia, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court judges, local departments of social services, advocates, parents, and any other interested stakeholders that it deems appropriate.

##### **Family Partnership Meetings**

2. Request that the Board of Social Services develop regulations for the use of family partnership meetings by local departments.

##### **Kinship Navigator**

3. Introduce a budget amendment to enact funding for a statewide Kinship Navigator Program. The budget amendment amount will be based on input from the Virginia Department of Social Services.

##### **Diversion Program Supports**

4. Request by letter and direct by budget amendment for the Virginia Department of Social Services to create a diversion program supporting relative and fictive kin families who have received temporary physical and legal custody from the court. DSS shall develop a diversion program that makes use of all federal and state monies available to provide a payment to relative and fictive kin families who have temporary custody through a court order that is equal to the monthly payments that current foster care families receive. DSS shall investigate the feasibility of using Family First dollars as a part of this payment. The Department shall report back to the Commission on Youth by November 30, 2021, with the steps needed to implement the diversion program.

## **Study on Education in Local Detention Centers**

### **Adopted Recommendation**

- 1. Introduce a budget amendment directing the Board of Education to recommend (i) appropriate staffing and funding levels necessary for State Operated Programs (SOP) in regional and local detention centers to provide a quality education program; (ii) implementation of appropriate efficiencies in staffing practices in such programs; (iii) statutory and regulatory changes needed to implement the Board's findings; and (iv) appropriate programs to redirect any potential savings realized from implementation of the Board's findings.**

**The Board shall consider (i) the dramatic decrease in the Average Daily Population in detention centers over the course of two decades without a comparable decrease in state funding; (ii) establishing a system-wide staffing ratio that is comparable to those provided in Regional Alternative Education Programs and aligned with the staffing requirements provided in the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act; (iii) implementing efficiencies, such as sharing SOP instructional staff with participating school divisions, hiring part-time teachers and dually-certified teachers and principals, and utilizing lead teachers in lieu of a full-time principals in programs with a low average daily population; (iv) changes to SOP operating agreements to facilitate more efficient staffing practices and to clarify the role of the state and school divisions in hiring and supervising SOP instructional staff; (v) increasing the use of enhanced distance learning; and (vi) the draft recommendations deliberated by the Commission on Youth from the 2020 study.**

**The Board shall convene a workgroup to assist in the development of findings and recommendations and shall include staff members from the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, House Appropriations Committee, Department of Planning and Budget, the Virginia Department of Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, President of the Virginia Juvenile Detention Association or his/her designee, the chair of the Virginia Commission on Youth or his/her designee, and anyone else the Board deems as appropriate to serve on the workgroup. Findings and recommendations shall be reported to the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee by November 1, 2021.**

## **Additional Recommendations**

### **Adopted Recommendation**

- 1. Introduce a budget amendment to extend financial support to youth aging out of Fostering Futures at age 21 until September 2021. Current funding utilizing the federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood funds ends in January 2021. The Department of Social Services shall investigate federal funding opportunities that may become available to support youth aging out of the Fostering Futures program and shall draw down such federal funding as it may become available with the goal of support through September 2021.**